

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

After the record-breaking wildfire season of 2000, Congress approved funds for federal and state agencies and local communities to develop and implement a national strategy for preventing the loss of life, natural resources, private property and livelihoods. The result of that planning and preparation is commonly known as the “National Fire Plan” (NFP) (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2002). This plan was approved in September 2000 and is fully titled *Managing the Impacts of Wildfire on Communities and the Environment: A Report to the President in Response to the Wildfires of 2000*. The NFP includes five key points: firefighting preparedness, rehabilitation and restoration of burned areas, reduction of hazardous fuels, community assistance, and accountability. In 2001, Congress released another directive requiring the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to engage Governors in the development of a National ten-year comprehensive strategy that would implement the NFP. For this effort, the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan* (Kempthorne et al. 2002) was developed. It was approved in May 2002 and involved cooperation and collaboration of the Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, the Governors of Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Oregon, and the Director of the Council on Environmental Quality. The primary goals of the Idaho Plan are to improve prevention and suppression of wildfire, reduce hazardous fuels, restore fire-adapted ecosystems, and promote community assistance. In December 2003, Congress passed the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). This act requires communities to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) and requires the county, local fire departments and the state entity responsible for forest management mutually agree to the final contents of the CWPP. CWPPs contain the following requirements: (1) Demonstrate collaboration among local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties, (2) Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure and, (3) Recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

The purpose of this mitigation plan is to identify and mitigate wildfire risks and negative consequences in communities and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas of Fremont County, Idaho. For the purpose of this plan a WUI is defined as “an area where improved property and wildland fuels meet at a well defined boundary”(NFPA 2002). The mitigation plan addresses Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) criteria contained in 44 CFR Part 201.6 and follows guidance from the *Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan* (Kempthorne et al. 2002) by: 1) identifying fire hazards that affect Fremont County and its residents, 2) providing sufficient information to make mitigation decisions, 3) discussing existing resources that are most current and best available and, 4) describing the process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved. The mitigation plan will be maintained, that is, monitored, evaluated, and updated annually within a five-year cycle, by a group of Fremont County residents or Wildland Fire Interagency Group (Table 1). The group will be represented by agencies countywide with wildland fire suppression experience and responsibilities. County Commissioners will take the lead for monitoring the plan while

the other group members evaluate the risks and vulnerabilities to wildland fire within their area of concern. The maintenance process will allow local governments, when appropriate, to incorporate the requirements of the plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans which will include public participation through scheduled hearings and meetings.

Fremont County proposes to reduce the hazard of wildland fire within three Fire Districts (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The benefit of the reduction of fuels, public education, and training the community on fire protection and prevention is a reduction in frequency of wildfires spreading from city or private property on to public lands and for wildfires spreading from public lands to municipal property.

**Table 1:** Fremont County Wildland Fire Interagency Group.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>
Bill Forbush, Chairman Donald Trupp John Hess Gordon Smith (former Commissioner)	Fremont County Commissioners
Bill Wathrick	Fremont County Emergency and Disaster Coordinator
Tom Steglemeier	Fremont County Sheriff
Weldon Reynolds	Fremont County Road and Bridge
Martin Gallagher John Grube	North Fremont Fire District
Dave Fausett	South Fremont Fire District
Lenny Schoope Mike Shell	Island Park Fire District
Kevin Conran	Bureau of Land Management
Keith Birch	Idaho Department of Lands
Jim Cox	US Forest Service – Caribou-Targhee
Steve Smart	High Country RC&D Council
Mike Clements	Idaho Department of Homeland Security
Kathy Hammonds	Community Solutions
	Yellowstone National Park Service